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ABSTRACT

Rather than a direct report on staff development programs, the speaker presents a case study of a district's experiences in organization change that were planned to improve the ways in which the school system fulfills its basic mission and goals. The change plan emphasized staff development at the administrative level as a means of decreasing the focus in the district that were opposed to change. The plan included retreats, workshops, attendance at conferences, and meetings with national authorities, but emphasized the reorganization of the district to reduce the effects of provincialism and to develop a solid management team relationship at the higher levels of management. The school board was left out of the management team. Eventually the district was reorganized into two distinct divisions-instruction and support services. One major provision of the reorganization was the establishment and staffing of a department to facilitate long-range planning and staff development. The rationale of the reorganization was to arrange the school system's management team so as to focus more directly on the clients of the system--the students. (Author/IRT)

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CASE STUDY: STAFF DEVELOPMENT IN ORANGE COUNTY, FLORIDA SCHOOLS

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Presented at AASA 1976 Convention, Atlantic City, New Jersey, February 22, 1976

(N.B.: The text presented below are the remarks of Superintendent Deck. This presentation was accompanied by slide presentations which are too voluminous to send for ERIC Clearinghouse dissemination. The subject matter of each slide presentation is indicated at the appropriate place in the narrative. In addition, Dr. Larry L. Zenke and Director of Staff Development and Planning Stephen Jamba made oral presentations which were not formalized into the narrative texts. The location of their remarks in the presentation is also noted below.)

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All of us who are a part of the Orange County, Florida School System appreciate the opportunity provided by the American Association of School Administrators to share some of our experiences with you this afternoon.

To set the stage for our presentation we would like to take a moment to remind all of us in the room of the real reason we undertake the kinds of work we are going to describe today.

[SLIDES: "For the Sake of the Children"]

Any case study needs to set a context for the events to be described: Our context is Orlando and Orange County, Florida which are of course, somewhat unique as is any specific locality.

Among the factors unique to the Orange County Public School System are the obvious ones of size, (in terms of enrollment), public policy in regard to state funding (in which the Florida Education Finance Plan is almost unique in the country), and the location of the school system in a bustling, growing community favored with an exceptionally inviting climate. Two of the less obvious unusual factors include (1) that we will review the experience of a school system with a

new superintendent who was the first organizational outsider ever appointed to the position, and (2) a public policy base in state law for staff development expenditures. In Florida, state statutes require that $5.00 per student be expended in each school system each year for staff development activities. This public policy is an exceptionally enlightened requirement. Not the least among the positive factors noted in this requirement is that staff development funds, are, by law, "protected" from the process of collective bargaining since those monies may not be used for salaries or employee benefits.

Other unusual factors in the Orange County experience may be identified ... the eyes and ears of the beholder as we move through our presentation. The presentation spans the experience in our school system over a period of approximately three years. As a matter of fact, it was three years ago today, here in Atlantic City, that I was approached by a consultant seeking candidates for the superintendency in Orange County, Florida. That conversation led to the case study which we are presenting today.

We believe that the Orange County Public School System today is becoming a cohesive, well-managed social system designed to provide the best possible

education -- within the resources available -- for the students of the Orange County community. This has not been an accident, but rather a carefully planned priority of the management team responsible for facilitating the work necessary to fulfill the educational goals of the system.

We have been asked to present a case study which reports on the staff development programs in the Orange County Public Schools. More properly, we will review a series of experiences in organizational change planned to improve the ways in which the school system fulfills its basic mission and goals.

In a very clear sense this is a case study of putting sound theory into practice by using organization development as an approach for improving organizational effectiveness and efficiency.

Kurt Lewin (1951) long ago theorized that change in a social system must involve a multitude of factors which encompass the entire system. In order to illustrate the process of change, Lewin developed the concept of "force-field analysis." The picture now on the screen shows this process in physical terms. The arrows represent the vectors, or forces, applied to a body in a state of equilibrium. In mathematical terms, the length of the vector is equivalent

to the strength of the vector. If the algebriac sum of the vectors is equal, the body will not move. If the strength of the vectors increases (on either side) the balance point will change until the sum of the vectors is equal again. There are two ways of doing this. One approach is to INCREASE one set of vectors; the other is to DECREASE the other set of vectors.

The same concept can, as a model, be applied to social systems. We cannot, of course, as in physics, directly and accurately MEASURE the strength of the sets of vectors. Nevertheless, the system will reach a new balance point. However, as Lewin points out, INCREASING one set of vectors without decreasing the other set of vectors will increase the tension and degree of conflict in the organization. Reducing the other set of vectors may reduce the amount of tension. Since increasing the vectors above a certain level may well result in higher tension, greater emotionality, agression, and lower constructiveness, it is clear that DECREASING the forces against change is preferable to applying greater pressure.

In our work in Orange County, Florida we have applied this concept, and we have used staff development as the basic strategy for DECREASING the

forces against change.

Lewin's theoretical constructs built on the idea of force-fields to describe change as a three-step procedure.

The first of the three steps is UNFREEZING which might be accomplished by introducing new information or information which shows discrepancies, a decrease in the strength of current values, attitudes, and behaviors resulting from new experiences or information disconfirming the perception of the organization, the individual, or other subsystems within the organization.

The second step is MOVING. That is, the organization or one of its subsystems is moved to a new level. This step ususally involves the development of new values, behaviors, or attitudes through internalization, identification, or change in structure. The third step is the change process, REFREEZING, involves stablizing the change at the new "quasi-stationary equilibrium" through the use of supporting mechanisms, e.g., changes in organizational structure, changes in organizational culture, changes in group norms, or modification of organizational policy structure.

Our work in Orange County during the past three years has applied this

theory in our efforts to improve the school system. Lewin's theory points out, too, that the unfreezing process involves very different problems in different situations. Chris Argyris (1971) expanded on Lewin's ideas, and he claims that strong resistance to change comes very often from the managers in the social system -- perhaps even more than other individuals. Argyris points out that many individuals are so "systematically blind" to their own behavior that they are culturally programmed" to behave in ways that considerably reduce the probability of change. Their desire to maintain the "status quo" cannot be significantly affected by increasing the pressure for change. A more effective approach is to reduce the amount and degree of the resistance to change. (Once again, in Orange County we have tried to use staff development programs and activities to reduce resistance to change and improvement.)

Now let's pause a moment to review in some detail the context of our work - the Orange County Public School System:

[SLIDES ON COMMUNITY AND SCHOOL SYSTEM]

During the Spring of 1973 the School Board of Orange County invited me to be a candidate for the Superintendency, and in the weeks of activity which eventually culminated in agreement for me to move from a Georgia Superintendency to Orlando, I attempted, with members of the staff, a broad analysis of the needs

strengths, weaknesses, and general potential of the community and school system.

From briefings, observations, and meetings with person in the community and in the school system, it was determined that nearly all the departments of the school system had been functioning relatively separate and independent of each other for several years. Most of the needed services were being delivered, but often in a less than systematic manner. State-imposed requirements were being met, but often more as ends in themselves than as methods to achieve an end.

The School Board, seven very distinct personalities, has been torn, for at least three years, by a variety of controversies such as sex education, desegregation, and the forced resignation of the former Superintendent -- a sign of worse crises to follow.

A minority of dedicated School Board members had a solid grasp of their role as policy-makers, but others on the Board evidenced an attitude of expecting to be involved on a nearly daily basis with the operation of the school system and its many schools.

It was obvious that some rearrangements were needed -- some desparately, others could take time. Immediately, we began a reorganization of systemwide

management as the basic intervention for improving the school system.

The efforts to improve the school system since have been sometimes difficult, often rewarding, invariably time-consuming, and even a bit bloody at times, but eminently worthwhile (in my opinion). We have consolidated and streamlined departments, increased and improved services, added schools, gained and lost personnel, and maintained about the same student population. Undergirding all of these efforts has been the planning, design, and implementation of a renewal subsystem for the purpose of staff development.

We have held retreats, sponsored workshops, attended national conferences, and conferred with national authorities in management and education -- all parts of a basic plan evolved from a combination of sources and aimed at the peculiar needs of Orange County and its school system.

Part of the reorganization, accomplished in July and August 1973 was designed to reduce the effects of the provincialism in the school system by importing some organizational cosmopolitans. Through some dismissals and resignations, we were able to shift several persons and to import two key persons -- one, a new Deputy Superintendent for Instruction; and two,

an Assistant Superintendent for a newly-created Department of Student Services.

In September, 1973, we got the school year successfully underway -- including the implementation of a Federal Court order which eliminated the last vestiges of the dual school system. I was then struck with an immediate personal crisis - the need for heart surgery - which took me out of action for nearly six weeks. However, this forced "vacation" proved to have a number of positive elements. I was forced to STOP, to take time to reflect. And as I reflected on all I had learned over a period of about three and a half months of association with the Orange County Public Schools, I came down to a basic objective which has pervaded everything we have tried to do since. This objective was to attempt to utilize organizational development to develop a solid management team relationship with some group in the school system. A cohesive team with a high degree of mutual trust would, I believe, provide a base of power from which to operate in attempts to improve the school system's delivery of education services.

A deliberate risk was run by eliminating the School Board from the team development because there seemed to be difficulties there which dramatically

manifested themselves later. The principals were eliminated from primary consideration since they were functioning with reasonable adequacy and relative autonomy. We opted for a small group of system-wide administrators and created what we call the Cabinet -- a top-level decision making roup composed of the Superintendent, the then three Deputy Superintendents, and the Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent.

This group quickly developed a high degree of mutual trust and became a cohesive, functional unit, and a dymanic force within the school system.

Because of several years the school system had been relatively isolated from the rest of the world, in part by design of previous Superintendents, we continued to import organizational cosmopolitans, but only enough to make a good mix between them and the local educators already invested in and dedicated to the Orange County Public Schools.

Through the efforts of the cabinet, and through some of the cosmopolitans, the school system began to shake loose some of its provincial and parochial ideas and attitudes. The basic strategy for this was based on staff development activities.

We began to expand the perspective of some of the locals by sending teams -- never individuals -- to national conferences, seminars, and leadership workshops presented by the National Academy of School Executives, the National Association of Secondary School Principals, and National Association of Elementary Principals, the American Management Association, and the National School Public Relations Association.

We used these activities to explore means for improving the education of students. We began researching and planning a quinmester schedule for the secondary schools. We planned and organized expansion of individualized instruction in the elementary schools. We explored and implemented ways to get the community involved in the educational process. And, we established the necessary policy base for improved management by undertaking the writing of a truly comprehensive policy manual for the school system. The School Board and staff worked for months on the codification of a comprehensive set of policies that have continually proved their worth in the day-to-day operation of the schools and various departments. Policies were reviewed and approved by the School Board after being written by a variety of people directly involved in the specific

topics. The utilization of the policy manual has had the desired effect of enhancing the autonomous leadership of middle management while simultaneously evoking a sense of system and cohesion throughout the entire organization.

Through all these expanding activities, certain members of the School Board began apparently to feel threatened by the Superintendent's cabinet and by the direction in which the school system seemed to be moving. Program recommendations sometimes took two and three Board meetings to be adopted, and some never got approved. Proposed personnel assignments were attacked for no apparent reason, and innuendos flew at nearly every encounter between the staff and these particular members of the School Board. In spite of these developments, however, the cabinet's influence was expanded as it stretched to the Superintendent's total staff, composed of the cabinet, the Associate and Assistant Superintendents, and a small cadre of specialists attached directly to the Superintendent's office.

Through two needs assessment retreats in August, 1974 -- one for all the principals and one for the systemwide mid-managers -- the cabinet and staff were able to begin the process of establishing a team management concept

throughout the entire system. Valuable information was secured at these conferences from which programatic improvements were designed and on the basis of which staff development activities were planned.

These two-day retreats, funded with staff development money, and held at a resort hotel on the Gulf coast, were unprecedented in the school system's history. This was more than just aking principals and other administrators to a resort hotel for a pleasant stay (although it was pleasant) and asking them what was wrong with the school system. Within weeks after their return and the opening of another school year, these mid-managers were able to see evidence (in terms of programs, projects and changed organizational practice) that their suggestions were being implemented within the limitations of time, money, personnel and energy. The team concept of management was beginning to touch these principals and mid-managers to help them feel a part of the total school system.

But, before you begin to think we were recreating Camelot let me illustrate how very badly threatened a majority of the School Board felt. A majority of the School Board, without warning in a Board meeting one evening, asked the

Superintendent and the entire cabinet to resign. Upon our individual and collective refusal, certain members of the School Board began a series of extra-legal efforts to fire the Superintendent. All this was done in the glare of public attention provided by television coverage of all School Board meetings, and apparently the community come to feel that the entire top management cadre of the school system could not be as rotten as the Board majority claimed. The public outcry against their actions was overwhelming. An election intervened and all three of the Board members running for reelection were defeated...thus providing a new majority of policy makers and bringing an era of comparative rationality and calm to the school system.

Prior to and during this time, it became apparent that more wide-ranging reorganization was needed. The resignation of the Deputy Superintendent during the hassle with the School Board provided opportunity for basic reorganization of the school system into two distinct divisions -- Instruction and Support Services. Formal arrangements were restructured, services and departments were streamlined, and forty percent of the principals were transferred, (not without protest) to allow for better utilization of talent, experience and personal motivation.

(I wish to stress that these transfers were unanimously endorsed by cabinet members being recommended for the School Board).

One of the major provisions of this reorganization was to establish and staff a department to facilitate long-range planning and staff development. The director of that department, Dr. Steve Jamba, will provide additional details in a few moments.

The rationale for this major reorganization was simply to arrange the school system's management team so as to focus more directly on the clients of the school system: the students. This new organization could not be an end in itself, but had to be designed as a flexible, ongoing means by which could be accomplished the basic mission of the school system: i.e., To improve instructional programs for students.

The students are the focus of our entire organization. The Division of Instruction, then, is the heart of the organizational chart for that division most directly affects what happens to students day by day by overseeing the design and implementation of instructional improvement.

The Division of Support Services has the responsibility of facilitating what

happens in the schools through business services, transportation, facilities services, food services, personnel services, institutional research, and data processing services.

The cadre of specialists linked directly to the Superintendent's office includes the Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent, three omsbudsmen who work primarily with principals and parents under the direction of the Administrative Assistant, a Public Information Officer, and a Specialist in Administrative Services, who provides services for School Board members and maintains all School Board records. Additionally, the law firm which serves as attorneys to the School Board works directly with the Superintendent, although any cabinet officer has immediate access to the attorneys.

Care was taken to stress that this restructuring of the Administrative team was an effort at formal organization which should be considered dynamic, not static. I quote from the statement of rationaly published with the organizational charts adopted by the School Board to implement the new arrangements:

> "This entire organizational arrangement should be viewed from the perspective of an ongoing development of the Orange County Public Schools as an organization. Organization development rests

on three basic propositions: the first is an evolutionary hypothesis that an organizational form most appropriate to the fulfilling of the mission assigned an institution must occur even in ways which include the rebuilding and/or revitalization of organizations; the second is that the most viable way to improve organizations is to change the systems or arrangements within which people work and live, so that beliefs, values, and accepted forms of interaction and relating are improved; thirdly, a greater awareness must be generated by the people in the organization of the collective responsibility they have for the fulfillment of the basic mission of the organization."

As we have gone through another school year and more than halfway into a third, minor and major changes in organizational arrangements have been made and will continue to be made as we find from experience better ways to facilitate the delivery of educational services.

As an example, we recently shifted a personnel administrator out of the personnel department, and made him a full-time labor negotiator directly assigned

to the office of the Superintendent directly. This was done to make an obvious difference between services of the personnel department and the stresses of the bargaining process.

The major changes were made in the school system to break people out of molds, to shake up their ideas, and to help them adapt to the needs of the 1970s. You remember I mentioned that teams of people were attending seminars and conferences on various topics and issues. As the teams returned from those meetings we evaluated the resources we had witnessed and assessed their value for our system. We began importing them into our system to work with all our management people.

Let me add paranthetically how disappointing it is that some of our more traditional resources that should be of help to us -- the universities and departments of educational administration -- in many cases just didn't have a contemporary grasp of school system needs.

One example of our practice of testing experiences with small teams and then importing them for our own benefit was in our preparation for collective bargaining. In December, 1973 a team of Board and Cabinet members attended

a NASE seminar on collective bargaining. It proved so useful that we imported the NASE faculty to Orlando for two weekend sessions with all our principals, selected systemwide managers, and all School Board members.

The NASE team hit our people with some real shockers. They told them that the paternalism some of them were practicing with teachers was going out the window.

They also shook loose more of the parochialism held onto by some of the principals by telling them in authoritative ways that "problems you will fact under collective bargaining are the same as those facing principals in Michigan, Illinois, California, and New York." This was some more unfreezing and it in some cases was painful. These experiences did, however, give us excellent preparation for administering the collective bargaining law passed by the Florida Legislature in 1974.

Following the success of this seminar, we began in earnest to consider ways to establish a definte management system within our school system. We tested other national resources such as the American Management Association and found them useful. We imported them for the benefit of the entire system. As we worked through these experiences we

began to work towards the development of a management by objectives format for our schools. We chose to begin by the development of a performance based evaluation system for all management personnel. Again, using a sound theoretical base, we invited an interventionist in the person of Dr. George Redfern to work as consultant with 18 representative managers from throughout the school system. This team worked with Dr. Redfern over a period of months during 1974 and early 1975 to design an evaluation system which we have dubbed "Evaluation by Objectives (EBO)". The system is tailored directly to the needs of our school system. It is the product of the work of our own people with Dr. Redfern serving as a change agent who evoked from the group the outline and details of the evaluation system. With this work completed, we felt we were ready for a significant next step in the development of a management by objectives program in the school system. [SLIDES ON EVALUATION SYSTEM]

We brought a NASE team in again, and this time we had <u>all</u> the administrators (assistant principals, principals, everybody) in the entire school system in one conference on management by objectives. We hit everyone with the same information at the same time so that common understandings could serve as the

basis of the management system. This NASE seminar also utilized a practice we feel is very helpful in that we held the seminar not in the school system, but in the facilities of the Orlando Naval Training Center (including the Officer's Mess for meals and attitude adjustment hours). We have used a variety of community facilities in similar fashion to gain the dual benefit of a "halo effect" for the site and facilities, along with wider community knowledge of the work and efforts ongoing in the school system.

Prior to the NASE MBO seminar, we had already held a successful three-day session on improvement of managerial performance conducted by an American Management Association team for the Superintendent's staff. This later proved valuable in that these people provided real leadership in involving the entire management cadre in the same types of experiences.

Following the NASE experience, in mid-summer 1975 we held another retreat -- this time with all principals, assistant principals, mid-managers, and the Superintendent's staff. For three days and two nights we met at Innisbrook Conference Center at Tarpon Springs, Florida to work out the problems of management and evaluation by objectives for ourselves with our own internal resources.

We have come to realize that any development of this kind is going to take time -- perhaps four or five years even to be fully and effectively operational. Part of the learning has been the realization by some of our people that all these activities were NOT leading up to an arbitrary announcement by the Superintendent. "This is the precise system we will follow. Here are the specific goals for each school and department."

Due in large measure to the organizational "folklore" based on past experiences, some of our people have continued to expect such arbitary announcements and actions. This is changing - slowly with a few, more quickly with the majority, and most importantly, it is true and real movement toward improvement in the organization. We are convinced that in order for all of these people to be firmly committed to the success of the system they need to be the architects of their own plans. They must be the ones to develop the system -- within commonly agreed upon guidelines -- for their own school or department. There must be a personal investment and committment to the effort by each individual.

And, so that the principals will know that top management is clearly committed

to the management by objectives thrust, we are incorporating it at the top first. They are seeing us struggle and succeed at this project before they completely implement it themselves.

We have been refining objectives and goals and working toward their fulfillment since last summer's planning retreat. By now everyone at the top level of management is committed to a set of relatively clear objectives, and it's heartening to see how the process has taken hold. Our mid-management team members are finding that their judgments are valued and that they are trusted to make their own decisions based on policy guidelines, and the lessons learned in seminars and group experiences. We are beginning to shape our school system into a manageable, cohesive unit to move together towards our basic goals, instructional improvement, more effective achievement on the part of students, and cost effectiveness. We're trying to do it with some strategies that are made possible by a management team. We have tried to base our efforts on sound theory, and we believe we are beginning to see the fruits of our labor.

[Oral Presentations by Drs. Zenke and Jamba]

(Slides illustrating Staff Development Master Plan for Teachers in Orange County)

(Slides Illustrating MBO System for Orange County)